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SUBJECT: CANADA ON SEPARATIST REGIONS OF GEORGIA

REF: STATE 134559

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) In a meeting with PolMinCouns on January 7 to discuss our way forward on the separatist regions of Georgia (reftel), Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Director General for Europe Robert Hage confirmed that Canada remains concerned about Abkhazia and South Ossetia and has been disappointed that this situation had seemingly dropped off the radar screen for many governments. He expressed appreciation for our consultation over a way forward, and noted its timeliness in light of a mid-January Heads of Mission meeting in Rome for Canada's European embassies, at which he promised to flag this issue for discussion. He admitted that Canada's understanding of the current situation was limited by its lack of an embassy in Tbilisi (its embassy in Turkey covers Georgia).

12. (C) Action request -- DG Hage suggested that a meeting of like-minded countries to discuss next steps might be the most productive technique to coordinate our approaches and to brainstorm over more effective common strategies. Please advise if we would consider convening such a session in the coming weeks or months.

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